

THE BRITISH WORKWOMAN OUT AND AT HOME.

"A Woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised.—Give her of the fruit of her hands, and let her own works praise her."—Psalm cxix.



"WILL FATHER BE A GOAT THEN, MOTHER?"

LUCY NORCOTT;

OR,

THE WIFE AT HOME.

A pony carriage stopped at the gate of a neat little garden in the village of Ferndene, and before a little boy who was playing there could call his mother, a young lady had jumped out and entered the cottage. She kissed the smiling young woman who met her at the door, for Lucy Norcott had been her nurse, and then, while taking the seat which was offered her, she said, "I am, in a great hurry, Lucy, but I am come to ask if you would just help us a little at the hall. The housemaids have both been sent away, and we sadly want somebody who knows about the house, to come and help. Will you come, just this once, dear good Lucy?"

But, dear, good Lucy knew her duty better. She said she was sorry, very sorry, not to oblige those for whom she had so great a respect, but that her first duty was at home.

"But just for once," urged the young lady. "Your neighbour could take charge of the children, and you could lock up the house all safe."

"And what is my husband to do when he comes home for his dinner, and finds the house empty, and his door locked against him?" asked Lucy, smiling.

"O, let him take his dinner with him in the morning," quickly said Miss Alstone.

"My dear young lady," said Lucy, and now she spoke bravely, though in a gentle voice, "my first duty is to my husband and children. To keep his house such an one as he can love to return to after his daily labour, and to give my little ones that care which none but a mother can give; this is what I am bound to consider, above everything else in the world."

"But think how nice it would be to add to your husband's earnings," again urged the young lady. "It must surely be always good to increase your income, Lucy."

"William's wages are enough for us, dear Miss Agnes, and there would be no saving, but rather loss, by my going out."

"But how so?" asked Agnes, surprised.

"Why, of course, my neighbour would not be troubled with the children for nothing; even if I did not pay her money, I must provide food enough for the children and for her too. Then cold meat and dry bread, which William would be obliged to take for his dinner, cost more than any little warm mess I can make for him here. So indeed I must not leave my home."

"Agnes looked vexed; what more could she say? But she was not going to be beaten yet, so she pleaded, "But do not labouring men often dine on cold meat and bread, even if they do come home?"

"Yes, Miss Agnes, certainly they do, but it is bad economy. I can warm up a little meat with potatoes and onions, or any other vegetable, and perhaps rice or flour, and make a little go much farther than if it ate it cold with bread. And then the children, if I give them dry bread and meat, they never seem satisfied, neither do they relish it; but when all is hot and savoury, you cannot think how they enjoy their dinner."

"Well, they seem to thrive upon it, certainly," said Agnes; "so you really are determined not to come? And I suppose I must own you are right as you always are, Lucy. So I must go and tell mamma that I have failed."

"She rose to go, but at the door she stopped and said, "But can you recommend to us any woman who is accustomed to go out?"

Lucy reflected a moment, then said, "Yes, there is Mrs. Johnson in the house next door to the 'Bell.' I know she goes to several families."

"Is she honest?" asked Agnes.

"I know nothing against her honesty; she seems clean and hardworking, by the accounts I have heard of her."

"Then good bye, Lucy; good bye, little ones, I must go and try Mrs. Johnson; but she won't be like you, Lucy," she added affectionately.

Now Lucy's little room, more like a parlour than a kitchen—for all washing and mending works were done in her scullery at the back of the house—was a picture of neatness, but the room at the door of which Agnes now tapped with her lively fingers, presented a striking contrast.

On a childish voice answering, "Come in," Agnes entered.

A girl of about twelve years of age was sitting

beside the fire, rocking herself backwards and forwards in the vain attempt to stifle the cries of a sickly looking baby, which looked as if it had never ceased wailing since first it came into this world. Another child, scarcely able to walk, was standing near her with a piece of bread and treacle in its hands, more treacle being visible on the face, hands, and pinafore, than on the bread itself. Two others were in the room, sprawling idly on the floor, playing with a broken toy.

The young lady hesitated a moment, but by this time the girl had risen, and was standing staring at her in a manner which expressed stupidity rather than rudeness.

"Is your mother at home, my girl?"

"No, she's up at Squire Thornton's," answered the girl.

"Is she engaged to be there to-morrow?" continued Agnes.

"No, but she'll be home later; do you want her, please Miss?"

Agnes hesitated, the cottage looked so miserable, the girl so uncouth and untidy, that she felt doubtful whether to engage the mother to come to the hall, but at length she said, "If she is not engaged to-morrow, perhaps she could come and speak to my mamma in the morning. Will you ask her to do so?"

"Yes, I won't forget," answered the girl, still shaking the poor baby, so that its plaintive whine came out by fits and starts. "We're poor enough, and mother has to work hard," she added, in a mournful tone.

"How is it that you are so poor?" asked Agnes, kindly. "Has your father no work?"

"Oh, yes, Miss, he gets work regular enough, but if it wasn't for mother, we should all be starved; poor mother always herself to death to keep us all."

Agnes felt distressed; she was very young, and had yet to learn the secret of the poverty of the labouring man who has plenty of work; so she only remarked the sorrowful look on the girl's face, and the general appearance of discomfort in the whole family. She felt unwilling to go and leave them without a few kind words. "So she said gently,

"That poor baby seems ill."

"She's always cross and fretful-like," replied the girl. "I never keep my quiet. You see, Miss, mother had to go out to work, when baby was only five weeks old, and I have to feed her as well as I can, for she only gets to mother at nights, and the neighbours say the bread and water doesn't agree with her."

"I will ask mamma for some arrowroot for her. But now I must go. Do not forget to send your mother to us to-morrow."

The girl promised, and the young lady returned home.

After hearing her daughter's account of her visit to the cottage, Mrs. Alstone ascertained that the woman Johnson was an honest hard-working person, who did really as her girl had said, "slave her life out" to provide for her family; but that the husband was a drunken fellow, who spent the greater part of his money at the public-house.

So the next day Mrs. Johnson was engaged to help in the house till the new servants should arrive.

Mrs. Alstone was kind-hearted and liberal, and she many nice scraps from her table did she give to the poor charwoman to take home to her family; and two or three different kinds of food for the baby were carried thither by Agnes; but the poor girl, Susan, who tended the baby as well as she could, knew not how to make these messes nice, and soft, and warm, so the baby thrived no better on them than it had done before. Yet the careworn, haggard-looking woman, her own clothes often ragged, and her appearance dirty, worked hard, and swept, and scrubbed, and was always civil and obliging, so what more could be done? She had no time to mend her clothes, for often it was late ere, weary to death, she walked the two miles to her home, and then she had frequently to endure abuse from her drunken husband, who would come in out of temper, just as she was about to creep into her ill-made bed, with the wailing baby in her arms. Then the poor babe would tug and tug, and get from her the tired unwholesome milk which had been kept unaturally for hours, and which, while it exhausted the already overworn mother, only served to cause suffering in the infant, whose wallings never ceased excepting when it slept, which was only at short intervals; and then in the morning, weary with want of rest, the mother would rise to walk off again to her daily labours.

Now all this was very pitiable, but let us not talk of it, as if such sufferings as these were the allotted

portion of the poor, or of the family of the working man. No, here, as in most other cases, an acquaintance with what Lucy Norcott had justly called her "first duty," would, in all probability, have saved poor Mrs. Johnson all her unhappiness. Her husband and William Norcott received precisely the same wages, eighteen shillings a week; and when Mary first married, their little dwelling was furnished out of her savings, and was as comfortable a cottage as you would wish to see.

Mary too, had neat clothes. She had been servant in a gentleman's family; and her wedding dress, as well as sundry useful articles, had been given her by her mistress and her daughters.

But Mary was not contented with eighteen shillings a week.

Her late mistress asked her to come in and help in the house, and she thought one-and-sixpence a day was not a thing to refuse; so she had not been married three months before she began to leave her home almost as early as her husband, and return at night even after the hour at which he left off work.

On these occasions the house must, of course, be locked up, and a cold dinner (often bread and cheese, for Mary had had no time to prepare any food the day before), was tied up in a handkerchief for Johnson to eat as he could by the roadside. And then, when evening came, with his wife still absent, what could the poor man do, but step into the wren, snug parlour of the "Bell," and wait there for her return?

Johnson had not been otherwise than steady when he married—he was not a total abstainer, but, as he fancied that he could not work so well if he had not a pint of beer daily; but he had been courting Mary for some years, and had kept himself sober for her sake. But now, the landlord of the "Bell" would have taken it off if he had sat in his parlour and drunk nothing; so, though he had had his pint at dinner, another and another were taken, till by the time his first child was born, Johnson had become an habitual drunkard.

Hard was the struggle, however, for the poor wife to get money from him to pay their rent, and keep her and the babe from starving; and before she had quite recovered her strength, Mrs. Johnson left the baby with a neighbour, and went out to work as before.

And this had now gone on, till, as we have seen, their eldest girl was twelve years old, and there were three others to feed and clothe, and one of them died in their infancy for want of their mother's care; and the last appearing as it had come into the world only to suffer. Mary Johnson was nearly the same age with Lucy Norcott, yet, with her haggard looks, her sunken eyes, and dead brown complexion, she looked nearly twenty years her senior.

Lucy, though she had not married till she was twenty-seven years of age, still retained the fresh look of her youth. Her colour was bright and healthy, her eyes clear, her step light; and, though her rounded form proclaimed her a matron, you would never guess that she had passed her three-and-thirtieth birthday. Her three children were healthy and strong, for they had been blessed with good constitutions; and, as she had never confided them to another's care, they had always been kindly and judiciously treated.

Lucy rose in the morning a little before her husband, in order to have a warm breakfast to give him before he set out to work; and when he came down, refreshed by his sleep in the clean and well-aired bedroom, he found everything neat and ready, and his careful wife, with her loving smile, to greet him.

Their babies, being healthy, soon learned to lie or crawl upon a clean cloth spread upon the floor, so that the mother could finish her work undisturbed, and be ready to take up the little one, ere it grew tired of amusing itself.

She had watched the cook during her period of service, and taken from her many a useful hint, which she now turned to good account; and thus she contrived, as she had told Miss Alstone, to make a little meat, well cooked, and mixed with vegetables or rice, form most inviting dinners, to which her husband sat down with pleasure. The table-cloth was always clean, so were the plates and cups, and the jug of fresh spring water looked so refreshingly cool, that William never thought of wishing for beer.

"The money that beer would cost pays the rent," he would say; "and my Lucy shall never know want because I drink her rent away."

How could any of this have been done, if Lucy, like her neighbour, had gone from home to work? Her children must have been neglected, and her husband driven from his home. "God has given me duties to perform, and I will try to do them," she would say. "He has given me a good husband, and I

will make him happy in every way I can." And with this view, simply and constantly before her, Lucy contrived to do all her washing and cleaning between the time of her husband's going out in the morning and his return for dinner; and he was, perhaps, the only man in the village who never knew what it was to have a *washing-day*. And thus, with their eighteen shillings a week, the Norcotts were rich.

Lately there had been a small but weekly increasing sum in the Post-Office Savings' Bank, ready against a rainy day, sickness, or want of work, or old age and its infirmities. Sometimes envious neighbours would wonder at the appearance of plenty and comfort in those whose position was the same with their own; and some even went so far as to say, that there must be a means of obtaining money of which they knew nothing. Perhaps the landlord of the "Bell" could have told them, that one great cause of this prosperity was their being no customers of his; but he held his peace, and only wished in his heart that Mrs. Norcott would take to going out to work.

But let us return to Mrs. Johnson. It is Saturday night, and she has been out at work all the week, "gaining," as she calls it, eightpence a day.

But when she comes home, three shillings of her hard earnings must go for rent, or they will be turned out of their house, for their landlord, knowing the character of Johnson, is strict in enforcing his weekly payment. Then the baker has let poor Susan have bread for the family all the week; for dry bread, with a little rancid butter, or dripping, has been all they have had to live on, and nearly four shillings go for bread. Coals, too, are dear, and children never know how to save in firing, so, many more are consumed every week, than need be if the mother had been at home; and thus all poor Mary's earnings are gone at once, spent, as it were, before she receives them; while for tea or candles, or any little needful groceries, as well as clothing and shoes for herself and the children, there is nothing but what she can beg from her husband, and it is a small sum indeed which he brings home on Saturdays. He has always a score at the "Bell," and while he pays that, he must drink again, for he knows that Saturday night is the time when his worn-out wife is doing the week's washing, and there is no room for him at home, even though she is come in; so he sits drinking on, drinking away the lives of his wife and children, and most certainly drinking away his own; because the wife, whom he once loved so well, has been ignorant of her duty, and made his home miserable.

And when Sunday comes, where are the Sunday clothes? Mary's have been pawned long ago, to procure food for her babes, and the poor children never had any,—they scrawled through the holy Sabbath-day, as they do through others, dirty, hungry, cross, and sickly. Even Susan cannot read, for ever since she was seven years old, she has had the charge of the younger ones, and no Sunday-school teacher has had an opportunity of leading her to the knowledge of her Maker and Redeemer. She is growing up as ignorant as she is miserable.

And when that girl is older, how will she pass her time? Will years of themselves bring wisdom, and will she learn to keep the house as her mother should have done? No. The habits of idleness, and dirt, and impudence, of her early days will cling to her; she will stand in the doorway watching the passers by, or joining in idle, perhaps sinful conversation; and never having been taught to distinguish right from wrong, her conscience will become hardened, and her career will probably be one of sin and shame. Poor girl! Is it her mother's ignorance of her duty that shall lay her thus low? Had the mother kept her home like Lucy Norcott's Susan, and had she attended the village school, and, being taught habits of neatness at home, might have become a valued servant in a gentleman's family, till, in her turn, she had taken upon herself the holy duties of a wife.

Oh, mothers, if not for yourself, yet for the sake of your yet innocent children, stay at home, and help to fit them for the duties of life, as none but a mother can. One Monday morning, Norcott happened to overtake his neighbour Johnson on his way to work. There was little in common between the two men, and Norcott had long felt shy of his drunken acquaintance; yet there was something in Johnson's appearance to-day which induced him to slacken his pace, that he might speak a few words before passing on.

Johnson's step was steady, his back was bent like an old man's, his face was purple and bloated, and his voice husky, as he replied to Norcott's kindly salutation.

"Aye, good morning," he said, gloomily, "the morning's always good with you; you look as fresh

as an apple, and as clean as if you were going to church; I wish I was as rich as you are."

"And why are you not?" asked Norcott, "our wages are the same."

"Aye, but you have got a clever managing wife, who knows how to manage everything, and she makes your home comfortable."

Johnson, replied his neighbour, gravely, "if you did as I do, give all your wages into your wife's hands every Saturday night, you might be as well off as we are."

"A pretty thing, indeed! And what am I to do for a drop of beer, I should like to know? The 'Bell's' the only place where I can have a moment's comfort, and how can I help going there?"

"Cannot you bid your wife stay at home and make things comfortable?" urged Norcott. "It seems to me that her going out has done all the mischief."

"It drove me first to the 'Bell,' and that's true," replied Johnson, bitterly; "but now I've got the habit of it, I can't live without it, and my wife says we should all be starved if she did not work; and Suke's a big girl now, and able to manage at home."

"And how does she manage, poor child?" returned Norcott. "but by toiling all day at the door, and gossiping. Why she cannot even do up the house fit to be seen, nor wash the clothes; and how should she, when her mother never taught her?"

"Well, well, now, that's all very fine, but poor folks must work and slave, and get on as they can, and not interfere with each other, that's what I am thinking." And Johnson looked so inclined to quarrel with Norcott, that he ceased from his well-meant remarks, and merely bidding him good-morning again, went on his way at the brisk pace which was natural to him.

What a happy thing it is for me, that, from the first, I determined that Lucy should never leave her home," he said to himself. "I might have been driven to the public-house like that poor fellow, for want of a home, and have been what he is, a poor, wretched, miserable drunkard. Oh, what mercy has followed me!" he exclaimed soon after, "what a mercy that my Lucy knew her duty, and was determined to do it! I do not believe poor Mrs. Johnson has an idea, to this day, that all her misery is her own doing. And many other people err through ignorance, I believe. They think only of earning money, and never reflect how much they lose by it; money, health, character, happiness. Would they be wiser, I wonder, if they did know it; if every wife and mother said, as my Lucy does, that her first duty is to her husband and children? Some women like gadding about into gentlemen's houses, or even those horrid laundries, where they can gossip all day, and get gin to drink;—perhaps even some of these might never have begun the bad habit, if they had known the misery and poverty which are sure to follow it."

So William Norcott went on, debating with himself this anxious question, till he arrived at the farm where he worked.

Wife of the labouring man! Take warning in time. Try to make home happy to your husband and children. Remember your first earthly duty, and, whatever be the temptations to go out to work.

STAY AT HOME!

M. A. R.

WOMAN AND CHRISTIANITY.—As woman was the first in the transgression, so He who came to raise the fallen and to save the lost, was the first to vindicate her cause. He was born of woman, and women's love followed Him from the manger to the sepulchre. When He had not where to lay His head, women ministered unto Him of their substance; when even his favoured disciples were ignorant of His real character, He revealed Himself to a despised daughter of Samaria, as the promised Messiah. He restored alive the dead son of the widow, and gave back to life the dead brother of the mourning sisters; he shrank not from the touch of the woman who "was a sinner," nor cast a stone on her who was laden in adultery; his last words of public exhortation were addressed to the daughters of Jerusalem; and when the multitude demanded his death, a woman proclaimed her sympathy with His fate. Betrayed by one apostle, denied by another, forsaken by all, woman clung to Him to the end, the last to linger at His cross, the first to seek His sepulchre. And, to a woman, He made the first manifestation of Himself after the resurrection from the dead. To His service, therefore, women, are especially called, that their influence may be rightfully directed towards those with whom they are connected.

SUNDAY THINKINGS,

TO BRIGHTEN WORK-DAY THOUGHTS.

Sunday, 7th February, 1864.

"HE IS BROUGHT AS A LAMB TO THE SLAUGHTER."—Isaiah liii. 7.

"He is brought!" Who? In Acts vii. I see Philip told the man from Ethiopia, that it meant Jesus. I will read all the verses, chapter vii. 36-40. So when this man was sitting in his carriages, reading Isaiah liii., Philip told him that it was all about Jesus. How could Isaiah have known all about Him so long before? for he wrote it 700 years before Jesus was born. God made it known to Isaiah by His Holy Spirit, so that he prophesied, that means, told beforehand, what would happen.

Now, let me look again; what does he say of Jesus? He says, He is brought to the slaughter, *like a lamb*, an innocent lamb. They don't put it to death because it has hurt anybody, or done any harm, but that it may be food for people, that they may eat it. As they eat it, it feeds their bodies. They live by eating it.

How was Jesus like a lamb? He did no sin. He was holy, harmless; yet they slaughtered Him. He was nailed to the cross, and died. The thorns tore His blessed head; the nails tore His hands and His feet; the scourge of ropes, with an iron point at the end of each rope, tore his back; the spear pierced His side; from all these wounds the blood flowed out, and Jesus died—the slaughtered Lamb of God. Why? That I might live. I will pray for the Holy Spirit to enlighten my ignorance, that I may understand this. I will read John vi. 53-57.

Sunday, 14th February, 1864.

"WHO HAD OWN SELF ASKED OUR SINS IN HIS OWN BODY ON THE TREE."—1 Peter ii. 24.

Here is a verse about Jesus again. Jesus "on the tree." That must mean on the cross, where He was slaughtered. Perhaps this, which Peter wrote, will help me to understand what Isaiah wrote, for the Holy Spirit moved them both to write it.

When Jesus was on the cross, his body was bearing our sins. Now I begin to understand. He did not deserve to die. He had no sins of His own. He was innocent, like a lamb. But he died for our sins. I remember Isaiah said, "He was wounded for our transgressions. He was bruised for our iniquities." (Isaiah liii. 5.) God had said, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." Ezekiel xviii. 4.

I have sinned, and I deserve to die. But Jesus, who had not sinned, died instead of me. He died just for us, the unjust. "God hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin." He bore our sins on the tree.

How did He bear them? "In His own body."

Jesus is God. God cannot die. Jesus became man that He might die. We had sinned. Jesus must be made, like us, sinners, or He could not suffer in our stead. So when He left the bosom of the Father, He did not take on Him the nature of the holy angels. He "Was made in the likeness of men." I will read Philippians ii. 5-11; and Hebrews 7.—18. It will tell me about it, and so this is why He was born of the Virgin Mary, and lay a little babe in the manger at Bethlehem. He was born that He might die. Might die for me.

He, *His own self*, *bare my sins*, in His own body, on the tree.

Sunday, 21st February, 1864.

"NOW ONCE IN THE END OF THE WORLD HATH HE APPEARED TO PUT AWAY SIN BY THE SACRIFICE OF HIMSELF."—Hebrews ix. 26.

This verse tells me something more about Jesus and my sins. When did he appear in a human body? "In the end of the world." It is sixty hundred years since men began to live in this world. But it is only sixteen hundred years since Jesus appeared. So life came near the end, not the beginning of the world.

How often did He appear to put away sin? "Once." He "Offered one sacrifice for sins." No need for Jesus to die again. That great sacrifice of the Son of God was enough for the sins of the whole world. "Christ being dead dieth no more."

This verse says Jesus *put away sin*. When He bore my sins on the tree, what became of them? He put them away for ever. Will they never come back on my soul, and make me guilty again before God? Never, if I believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. How

blessed! "Thou hast cast all my sins behind Thy back."

I will read Leviticus xvi. and pray for the Holy Spirit to make me understand the meaning.

It says (verse 21), they put all their transgressions and sins on the head of the goat by confessing them over the goat. And then the goat was led away into a far-off land, never to come back with those sins any more. It bore them away, and they were put away for ever.

So Jesus offered Himself a sacrifice, to take away our sins for ever. They will not be found again in death, or before the great white throne in the day of Judgment, for any who have confessed them, and laid them on Jesus and forsaken them.

My faith would lay her hand
On that dear head of Thine,
While like a penitent I stand,
And there confess my sin.

Jeremiah l. 20, Isaiah xliii. 25.

Sunday, 28th February, 1864.

"BEHOLD THE LAMB OF GOD, WHICH TAKETH AWAY THE SIN OF THE WORLD."—John i. 29.

Here is a new word, "*Behold*." The other verses told me what Jesus did. This tells me what I am to do.

Who am I to behold? "*The Lamb of God.*" That reminds me of the first verse, "*He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter.*"

What did he do? "*Took away the sin of the world.*" That reminds me of the second verse, "*He bare our sins on the tree.*"

What did he do with the sin? "*Took it away.*" That reminds me of the third verse, "*He 'put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.'*"

And now this fourth verse bids me behold Him.

How can I behold him? Jesus is in heaven. Not with my bodily eyes. I must behold him by faith with my heart. I must love to look upon Him and believe He died for me.

Blessed Jesus, help me to see Thee now by faith. Open my blind eyes. Help me to confess my sins and lay them all on Thee. Blessed Jesus, take them all away. Wash me in Thy precious blood, whiter than snow. Cleanse me from all my sin, and then bid me go and sin no more. Amen.

Oh, yes, I must hate sin and forsake it, since Jesus died for it. I will try and behold Him every day; the Lamb of God; and love Him more and more, for all His love to me, a poor sinner.

Only to think, "*God so loved the world, that he gave His only begotten son.*" "*The Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world.*"

E. A.

The British Workwoman, OUT AND AT HOME.

ST. VALENTINE'S DAY.

In the short and somewhat gloomy month of February, there is a most delightful break for the young and unmarried people. St. Valentine's Day—looked forward to with eagerness, welcomed with trembling joy, looked back upon with pleased retrospection—is the day of days in this second month.

The postman's knock has generally a pleasant sound. It brings visions of kindly words and loving thoughts; warm-hearted expressions, to be treasured and re-read, always with tender eyes and moved lips. Sometimes it is a much-dreaded sound. When we fear the tidings the unopened letter may contain; in a loved-one lies ill; when some great loss is anticipated; when the foreboding heart beats sadly with undefined fear; then the postman's knock is almost like a knell.

But on St. Valentine's Day all is mirth, and fun, and gladness. The postman seems more tardy than ever delivering his treasures. Peep-

ing behind the blind, taking surreptitious looks into the streets, with very bright eyes and rosy cheeks, are the young ladies of the house. And their remarks are jerked out somewhat in this fashion.

"Ah! there he is, at Mr. Simpson's. One for Mary, no doubt."

"Oh! and I declare Ann Harris has one! How pleased she looks."

And then, with a joyous little scream, "Ah! here he is!"

What a commotion in the hall! A little bit secret, because "what *would* father say?" Yet so joyous that they cannot contain it all. In the midst of it what confusion of tongues. "Let me look at yours, Maria." "What a beauty mine is." "Ah! I know who sent this." While another, who has been really touched, pockets hers, saying nothing about it.

The excitement is general. It is here in the



THE LACE-MAKERS.

hall, below in the kitchen, on the stairs, yonder among that group of girls going into the factory, in that opposite room, where the needlewomen steal a minute to open their letters, and to laugh at Susan, who has had to pay two-pence for her's, and finds a very ugly misrepresentation inside.

"I never take them when there's two-pence to pay. Any young man, who was worth thinking of, would afford a stamp for his valentine."

Most certainly he would. And if he were very worthy, it is questionable if he would send a valentine at all. Honest, manly hearts, can generally find utterances by more legitimate means. And any true-hearted woman would prize half-a-dozen tenderly spoken words more highly than the most beautiful Cupid ever cut in paper, though surrounded by the handsomest border, and inscribed with the most sentimental lines!

Still, the 14th of February will arrive, and the valentines will be sent, and read, and laughed over—perhaps, though that is a pity—sometimes cried over too. They may occasionally contain a word of truth, and convey a correct idea; but, generally, we would advise our young friends not to think too much of them; not to be too elated when they arrive, and not to feel too disappointed even if the postman should omit to call at their house on the eventful morn.

It is a very old saying. Perhaps you have heard it until you are tired of it. It is true, nevertheless. *Young people, especially young women, cannot be too careful in matters relating to the affections.* Little know they of the pitfalls around them. Life seems only a beautiful dream; whereas it is a most solemn reality. However bright and fair it looks on St. Valentine's day, may all our sisters be guided rightly in the important selection of their future companions.

And it were better to find them in the homes, in the Mutual Improvement Societies, in the Sunday School, than in the Valentine's Letter.

With this thought in our minds, we solicit the attention of our subscribers to a little suggestive. Let the mercurier of the Post Office, while they bear to many a light-hearted—but perhaps giddy girl—the desired missive of the fourteenth, bear many copies of this journal, to the thoughtful and the thoughtless—are unexpected, but let us hope no unwelcome valentine, breathing of a love more pure and holy than the love of earth, and happiness greater and more lasting than this earth can give.

THE POOR LACE-MAKERS, AND HOW TO HELP THEM.*

In an elegantly got up little book, we have been reading all about Olney, the pen-and-ink descriptions which are enriched by some charming illustrations. The town deserves to be better known than it is, and thousands of readers, who are familiar with Cowper and the Olney hymns, will hail this volume with delight. Every page teems with entertaining and instructive matter. The following particulars concerning the lace trade, is sure to be read with interest, and will, doubtless, make many of our readers anxious to form a closer acquaintance with the volume.

"The inhabitants of Olney are much engaged in lace-making; and as the little girls are 'put to the pillow' as early as six or seven years of age, they are taken away from the National Schools very young. The ladies try to make up for the loss by Evening Classes, and extra effort on Sundays, when school is open three times a day. But it seems to be a very reasonable question, whether when the lace-making is so miserably paid, would it not be better to discountenance the practice of bringing so many girls up to this kind of manufacture.

At the highest price they have been able to secure for a long time, they can only earn a very scanty subsistence, the best workers seldom getting more than four shillings a week. Ladies might do the poor people a service by purchasing their best specimens of work at *EXTRAVAGANT* prices. It is little known as English manufacture, and generally passes for Maltese, to which it is frequently superior. Some of the collars and cuffs are beautifully even and delicate in their texture, and the coiffures, lappets, parasols, covers, and the black and white laces, sold by the yard, are very handsome; and as being the work of our own poor, should certainly not be held in less esteem than that of foreigners. For years past, to procure the bare necessities of existence, they have been obliged, from infancy, to labour so constantly, as to be unable to give much attention to ordinary household affairs; but of course this may be remedied by paying them better for their work, that they may not require to sit so many hours at the pillow.

"As it is, many, when they become wives and mothers, are so ill-prepared for their duties, that they do not know how to put on the simplest patch; and I am told that several women eke out a living by mending for the others, which is certainly better than wearing their clothes till they drop to pieces, but not the most economical way of living for poor people. There is also a great dearth of domestic service, which is more respectable, and a better preparation for the home duties of married life. Dr. Langley, the father and predecessor of the present

* "Olney and the Lace-makers," Macintosh, Farnborough Row.

esteemed Vicar, made an effort to establish a Training School for servants. Would it not be well to endeavour to revive this? Very many families, doubtless, would like to be supplied with servants from such a place as Olney, trained so as to be given health and activity in the perfect performance of all domestic duties; having an intelligent acquaintance with the truth of God, and an earnest desire to recommend it by the cheerful performance of all relative duty. Surely the women of Olney have now sufficiently had experience of what is to be gained by sacrificing personal health, domestic comfort, social usefulness, and their share in the great mission of England—to the cramping, bleaching, poverty-stricken manufacture of Lace-Making; for the women and girls have a kind of bleached appearance; and although intelligent, seem to have almost as little idea of their circumstances being improved, as the Irish, not a great many years ago, generally had. Extremely low diet, and continual sedentary occupation, may have something to do with their seeming want of hope. Weak wealth is also much too common. And yet some, even of the poorest, have a keener appreciation of the beautiful in Nature and Literature, with more general knowledge, than is usual in the same class of life in England. Possibly the foundation of this has been in their religious education and poetical associations.*

More than fifty years ago, Mr. Gamblet wrote:—

"I have occasionally visited some of the lace-rooms in Olney, of about six or seven feet square, and sat down with three or four females, who probably had never been ten miles distant from home, working at their pillows, or as a stranger would suppose, playing with their lace bobbins. While their fingers have been moving with the rapidity of those of a lady performing a concerto on the piano-forte, I have been instructed, edified, and surprised at their conversation. I have on several occasions sat with astonishment, to hear specimens of natural eloquence. I have mentally criticised the language and the sentiments of my humble and intelligent companions. I have sometimes said to myself, You have delivered sentiments which would do honour to a lady of superior education, in language which would not disgrace her.

"I have proceeded in my reflections: Well, you have, from your childhood, sat under the ministry of Newton, Scott, Bead, Home, and Stephenson. They have read you in your cottages. You have constantly read your Bible, and other useful religious books. God has given you good natural talents, and you have not laid them up in a napkin. After reflections of this kind, my *prima facie* astonishment has subsided, and been lost in admiration at the effect of religious information and principles."

Upon inquiry, a friend residing at Olney has supplied me with the following particulars respecting the songs of "The Lace-Makers."

"The children learn to make lace, not so much at home with their mothers, as at lace schools kept by dames. When the last trade was better, most boys used to learn as well as the girls; and even men used to make lace, as they could earn more at 'the pillow,' than at agricultural labour. I have seen old men who made good wages at the beginning of this century."

"The 'Songs of the Lace-Makers' were of the same class as the nursery rhymes.

"Hush-a-bye baby, on the tree top," &c., and were sung by the children when at work. The proficiency of the children was estimated by the number of pins they could stick in an hour. They were set so many score of pins, and counted as they went on. The singing, or rather chanting, assisted them in the counting, and also kept them together in their work. I am told that we cannot imagine either the effect of thirty or forty children's voices uniting in this 'sing-song,' nor yet the aid it was to them.

"These 'Lace Tellings,' as they were called, were repeated over and over, the number at the beginning lessening as the task appointed neared its conclusion, as—

'Nineteen miles have I got to go.'

'Eighteen miles have I got to go.'

'Seventeen miles have I got to go.'

"It is only the very old people who remember anything about these 'Lace Tellings,' as they have not been used in the schools about Olney for many years. Lately they have sung hymns, or some of the current songs of the day.

"From the specimens we have been able to collect

from the memories of the old Lace-Maker in the portrait, and one of her friends, few will be disposed to regret that the old 'Tellings' have become obsolete. These that follow are evidently the 'Songs of the Lace-Makers,' mentioned in the Northamptonshire Glossary, as assisting 'the young worker'; and are thrown aside, with other childish things on leaving the Lace School."

OUR VILLAGE GIRLS.*

BY HETTY BOWMAN.

A VERY useful addition to school libraries is this little book, and well is it calculated to answer the purpose of the writer. That purpose is the welfare of the British Workwoman; to lead our village girls to grow up true, pure, brave-hearted, worthy of all love and honour; busy with Martha in her household cares, sitting with Mary at the Master's feet. It is full of useful, homely, hints, and the narratives are all instructive. Miss Weston, who is represented as taking a deep interest in all that concerns the village girls, is a pattern woman, doubtless drawn from life; pious, gentle, amiable, unadorned, she is the means of exercising an immense influence for good over those amongst whom she labours. Scattered among a group of happy listeners, and happy herself, she is represented to us as showing the poor and uneducated, how to make the best of both worlds.

We append the narrative of one of the girls, who, though in early life impressed with the truth, grew worldly and careless, but was brought back again into the right way:—



THE GOOD TEACHER.

"But to church Jane Hardy seldom came. When she did, it was with a bonnet so bedecked with roses that it looked as if she was carrying a basket full of them upon her head. Time passed on, and Miss Weston was pained to hear of her associating with the giddiest girls in the village, and, what was worse, being seen in company with several young men of not very good character. When the Whitsuntide hiring came round, Jane was at the fair, and in one of the low dancing rooms in the little market town; besides, being as Edith knew, at a 'tea-drinking,' held at one of the public-houses in Ashton. All this grieved her teacher exceedingly, and she tried every plan she could think of to gain some influence over the misguided girl. But she carefully kept out of her way, and avoided every chance of meeting her. Edith was almost in despair, when, one day, a happy thought struck her. She would buy a new dress, and get Jane to come and make it! 'I do really want one,' she said to herself, in excuse for her extravagance, 'and if I get her into the house it won't be so expensive as having it made in town.'

"She mentioned the plan to her mother and sister, and was met by a laughing remonstrance from Kate;—'So Edith carried her point, bought her dress, and sent for Jane Hardy to make it. She came, laden with fashion-books and patterns, to which Miss Weston paid very little attention; but explained the simple way in which she wished the dress made, in agreement with her own lady-like taste. Jane thought it would not look at all well, 'she never made a dress in such a way before,' but, of course, was obliged to give way to her wishes.

"That would not do at all. And, besides, if I did she very likely would not come, bought her dress, and sent for Jane Hardy to make it. She came, laden with fashion-books and patterns, to which Miss Weston paid very little attention; but explained the simple way in which she wished the dress made, in agreement with her own lady-like taste. Jane thought it would not look at all well, 'she never made a dress in such a way before,' but, of course, was obliged to give way to her wishes.

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* The Book Society, Paternoster Row.

"Miss Weston spent a good part of that day in prayer, that God would give her the wisdom and gentleness, and teach her the loving faithful words which she felt she so greatly needed. She knew that nothing she could say would reach the wayward girl's heart; but the Spirit of Love from above could touch it, and He would be given in answer to her petitions."

In the evening she went into the room where Jane was sitting at work, and offered to help her a little while, in order that the dress might be finished that night.

"Oh, I shall soon be done, ma'am, thank you; I can manage it well enough myself."

"But Miss Weston saw that her progress had been very slow, and her work not particularly good. She made no remark upon this, however, but proceeded to stitch in a sleeve, talking pleasantly as she did so. Jane soon seemed more at her ease, and answered the young lady's many questions about her brothers and their progress at school, and her own life while learning her business at C— Gradually Miss Weston took the conversation back to the days when Jane used to come to the Sunday School as a child, and tried to soften her by awakening old recollections. Then she spoke of Willie (a younger brother recently departed), telling Jane many things which she herself knew almost, but had not time to say. She spoke of her mother, and related many of her simple, holy thoughts, which she shared with 'Miss Edith' more frequently than with anyone else. She talked a good while, without seeming to expect an answer, till at length Jane's tears began to fall upon her work.

"It was such a beautiful death, Miss Weston went on; such a quiet, happy falling asleep in Jesus. I am sure you can never forget what he said to you, Jane; the words seem often to have sounded in my ears since—"meet me at the right hand." "Dear Jane," she added, rising, and laying her hand on the girl's shoulder, "are you trying to meet him there?"

"Jane was completely subdued. She pushed her work aside, and bent her head on the table, crying bitterly. Miss Weston waited till she was calmer; thankful, meanwhile, to see the tears flow.

"I have been very unhappy about you, Jane," she said at length, 'because I could not help fearing you were not walking in the way which leads to that happy meeting-place.'

"No," said Jane, passionately, 'I haven't been, and I knew it all the time. I knew I was going wrong, and yet I couldn't stop.'

"Did you ask Jesus to stop you, Jane? Only His hand can do it."

"No, I couldn't pray and live so as I did; so I gave it up."

"You had better have given the wrong life up, Jane."

"Yes; and I wanted to do it, but something seemed to hold me back, and I wasn't happy either; I tried to drown it, but there was misery enough in my heart often; and couldn't help thinking of that text you gave us the night before I went away, you know;—and how I wasn't following God as a dear child."

"Satan was holding you back, Jane. He had got his chains about you, and nothing but Christ's love and power could break them. I can not bear to think where they were leading you to. I have been most grieved to hear of your being at the public-house dance. You know the kind of company you would be in there—such as no modest girl should be seen in. A woman only puts herself into the way of evil in such places, and if she falls as, alas! so many do, I am afraid it is little to be wondered at."

"Jane shuddered. 'I never thought of it till now,' she said. "'Oh! Miss Weston, can you help me to get out of it—this wretched life?'

"Christ can help you, Jane: I cannot, except by asking Him to do so. But you must ask Him for yourself, too. You must ask Him to make you, as the Bible says, 'a new creature'; to give you the 'new heart and the right spirit,' without which we cannot be His disciples, or see His kingdom. And you must watch, as you pray, and strive as well as you can, to determine to break these old ties completely, without any reserve, and holding back. It will be hard work at first, I know,—very, very hard, and you have no strength in yourself to do it, but look to Jesus, cling to Jesus, and His grace will bear you through it all."

"Oh, ma'am, you don't know how hard it will be,' sobbed poor Jane, wringing her hands almost convulsively, and then she told Miss Weston, what indeed she had suspected before, that she was engaged to be married to Will Roberts, one of the men who had been in the village, with whom she had been 'keeping company,' without her parents' knowledge, ever since her return home.

"Her kind friend could hardly say a word in reproach of the past, the poor girl seemed so broken-hearted, she only exhorted her, as she valued character, reputation, everything that a woman ought to hold dear, to break off the engagement at once. 'And, oh,' Jane, this keeping company without your parents' knowledge,

and meeting him at night by stealth,—indeed, indeed it will never do: you *must* give it up!"

"But, perhaps, I might do him good," doubtfully suggested Jane.

"It's a dangerous experiment to try. At any rate you would be doing wrong yourself, and we are not to do evil that good may come. We cannot pray. Lead me into temptation, if you see straight into it ourselves. Besides, no woman ever did do a man any good in such a way. Men have stronger will than we, and the weaker always has to give in. I know it would be very hard for you to give him up,—the hardest thing that *one* could do to a woman in all her life,—but you have to choose between him and Christ;—one or the other I am afraid you must lose."

"Mind," added Miss Weston, "I do not say it was wrong of you to get engaged, far from it; but it was wrong to do it without your parents' knowledge and consent, and wrong to keep up these secret meetings at night, when you fancied nobody knew. You cannot tell the misery and sin they end in, in too many cases. Besides, if a man's love is worth anything, he will not be ashamed to come forward in an open, manly way, and ask you from your parents, as every man should do, and you need not be ashamed to be seen with him in broad daylight, instead of sneaking about in the dark, as if you were doing something wrong."

"I knew I was doing wrong," said Jane, humbly, for all her pride seemed to have given way at once. "He doesn't follow much good, poor fellow! But—" "We may pity him, indeed, and pray for him, too; but how could you hope to be happy with such a man, Jane? What can a woman expect from a drunkard, and a Sabbath-breaker? And if he does not keep God's law, is he likely to do his duty to his wife? And how can you love a man when you cannot respect, and honour, and thoroughly trust?"

"Miss Weston spoke warmly. Her ideas on the subject of marriage were very high; not a bit too high, though. Perhaps, if our village girls thought more seriously about these things, there would not be so many unhappy couples, so many cheerless homes. Perhaps, then, too, they would lose the stain which rests so darkly upon them in many parts of the country, and learn to guard more jealously that character for modesty and purity, without which a woman is a disgrace to her sex and to her name. I know you do think about marrying; what girl does not? And it is very natural, for *you* should think about it, and not in the least wrong; provided you do not treat it as a thing only to be laughed at, and jested about. Marriage is too sacred to be laughed at. It is the one earthly thing which, generally speaking, makes a woman happy or miserable for life. And it brings with it so many new duties, so many solemn responsibilities that it should never be entered upon lightly; should never be entered upon at all, except with one whom, as Miss Weston said, we can respect and honour; one who will help and not hinder us in keeping the commandments of God; one by whose side we may dare to face the whole world, because we know it cannot say one truthful word against him; one to whom our ignorance may look up for guidance, and in whom our weakness may trust for strength, so far, at least, as it is right to look up to; one to whom our heart and hand; one with whom we may stand at the judgment seat of Christ; one with whom we may hope to spend eternity."

"Miss Weston and Jane hardly had much more talk that night. Jane found in her true sympathy, and much wise counsel in her difficulties. She did not tell her father and up to *bring* Will Robert to her, but she would be of little use to do that. But she tried to show her the necessity of not allowing him to follow her any more. She spoke of the One Healer, who alone can bind up the broken heart, and speak peace to the troubled spirit, when it turns aside wearily from all human comfort."

"Take your sorrow to Him, Jane. He is the best, the only friend in trouble. His love will never grow cold, never disappoint you."

Jane could not realize this yet. Her penitence was too deep to admit, so she gave up her clinging heart. Miss Weston did not try to lessen her feeling of guilt. She only pointed her to the Cross, and bid her lay her burden there.

The dress was not finished that day, but Miss Weston did not much concern herself on this account. She knew that the day had not been lost. Indeed she long looked back upon it as one of the happiest she had ever spent. Do you know the meaning of this text, "If any of you be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness, considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted."

A VERY clever physician asserts that the words, looks, and actions, which infants see and hear in the first two or three years of their lives, do actually form the grand essential outlines of their future characters; and so indelibly are they impressed that it will be difficult to new-model them in future years. How careful then should the mother be as to the kind of words she hears, and the kind of actions she sees! How wise should she herself be! How perfect too!

ELLEN'S COMPLAINT.

A THOUGHTFUL MOTHER'S LESSON.

"I DECLARE I'm weary of work! It's work, work, from morning till night. As soon as I've finished one thing it's another. There's neither rest nor cessation." "What was my Ellen saying?" enquired Mrs. Everall, kindly. "Has anything troubled you, my child?"

Ellen hung her head. "I was only saying, mamma, how tired I am of work. I seem continually employed, and never get time for recreation, like other young people."

"What do you mean by being continually employed, and what do you understand by recreation?"

"I mean that I have so much household work to do, and hardly ever find time to go out visiting, and to places of amusement, like others of my age."

"Two great blessings for you, my dear, if you regard them in the right light."

Ellen elevated her eyebrows. "I cannot see that they are blessings, at all, mamma. Will you explain?"

"In the first place, would you like to grow up a useless woman, or to be associated with the despicable throng of giddy triflers, who spend life in one never ending round of folly; worse than useless, because exerting a baneful influence wherever they move?"

"No, mamma, I should not like to belong to one class or the other; but I cannot see how my having a little more leisure, and going out occasionally to a party, or a place of amusement, must necessitate my becoming either useless or frivolous. There's Mary Lacy, whose parents are not so well off as we are, never does a thing at home from morning till night; is always dressed in set company, and is continually going to some entertainment or other. She does not seem frivolous either, that I can see."

"And this is the kind of life you would like to lead? You imagine it would make you happier?"

"It must be much more pleasant, certainly, than to be for ever at work, as I am."

"Tell me what you mean by for ever at work?"

"Why, constantly doing something, of course; and then I do mean washing up the tea-things, assisting to make the beds, occasionally going into the kitchen, to learn how to bake and cook, and to the laundry on ironing days?"

"Yes, mamma, and the endless variety of needle-work you make me do, stocking-mending included."

"And would my daughter wish to grow up in ignorance of these duties?"

"I cannot see what use they will be to me, any more than to Mary Lacy, and they certainly are a great bore."

"With the views Mary Lacy's parents take as to her training, or what will best fit her for the duties of life, I have nothing to do. I only know I have a daughter who is dear to me as my own soul, and in her interest and well being, my own is inextricably interwoven. In her education, I think not only of the present moment, but of all her future walk through life, as well as of the tremendous results which must be the issues of that walk. And criminally unwise should I be, and worse than cruel, if I did not endeavour to teach her, to the best of my ability, every duty calculated to fit her for the destiny that awaits her, and to enable her to set a bright example as a woman and a Christian. Could I do less than this, I should wrong my child, and act unworthily of the sacred name of mother."

"But, dear mamma, what will all these disagreeable things have to do with my shining in life." To me they seem things only fit to be ashamed of. I cannot bear to be seen with soiled hands from household work, and in a condition not fit to be looked at, from cooking and ironing."

"Neither ought you *ever*, Ellen, to be in a condition unfit to be seen."

"How can I help it, mamma?"

"By nicety in your work, doing it with method, and by availing yourself of the suitable helps to ensure order and cleanliness, which I have placed within your reach. If you think, however, it is any disgrace for the tokens of work to be sometimes seen upon your person, provided they are unavoidable, and not the result of slovenliness, you are labouring under a very foolish, but very common error."

"But surely, mamma, you do not mean to say it is any credit, or pleasant either?"

"I do mean to say it is decidedly a credit;

and to a rightly constituted mind ought not to be disagreeable. Only the vain and weak-minded would be ashamed of the duties with which it behoves every woman, whether mistress or servant, to be practically acquainted; and none but an individual whose praise would be censurable, could think it derogatory to a young person to be willing to learn and do cheerfully and well. Without a thorough knowledge of all that belongs to woman's proper sphere, domestic economy, and this household work included, that you so much dread, depend upon it no woman is fitted to go through the world creditably or aright. It is the want of this, perhaps, mainly, that makes so many gloomy freeways, and unhappy homes, even in the middle walks of life, to say nothing of the lower."

"Well, I confess I can hardly see how any one who can afford to keep servants, should need to be worrying themselves with such drudgery. It seems to me useless, and out of place."

"I do not say that a person who can afford to keep a sufficient number of servants, to do the work thoroughly, does need herself to do *very much* in that way; but be assured, that it is incumbent upon every woman; who would faithfully discharge her duties as a mistress, to know intimately and practically, how work ought to be done, and domestic affairs rightly managed. Without this knowledge she can hardly escape wrong being done, sometimes grievous wrong, to one party or other."

"How so, mamma?"

"If I do not know the best way to spend my husband's money, Ellen, am I not in danger of needlessly wasting it? If I am not acquainted with the right prices of the articles consumed in my household, and the proper quantities to be consumed, do I not hold out a premium to the tradesmen, if dishonest, to impose upon me, and to my servants to be extravagant and wasteful. So if I cannot tell how work ought to be done, and the right time to be spent in doing it, my servants will naturally become careless and superficial, as well as wasters of my time; or on the other hand, I shall be expecting more from them than is either just or equal."

"I see what you mean, mamma. But having learnt these things, what need to continue doing them, when not obliged by circumstances, as in my case, especially when they are so very disagreeable."

"Great need, particularly as they are so very disagreeable. You are learning two most important and useful lessons, that of perseverance in right under difficulties, and of consideration for the feelings of others."

Ellen smiled dubiously. "I think I know what you mean by the first, but I hardly see how constantly doing things unpleasant, can teach consideration for the feelings of others."

"I will explain more particularly what I mean by both. First, then, every time you perform a particularly unpleasant duty well, despite your own inclination, *because it is a duty*, you gain a victory over selfishness, and increase your power of surmounting the obstacles to right action self-love so often throws across your path, your powers of endurance become strengthened, and your mind braced and energized for future demands upon your patience and perseverance. Indeed, it often happens that a mind so disciplined, becomes capable of great and heroic deeds of self-sacrifice and disinterestedness, spurning the petty impediments to its upward course, over which feebler and untaught natures stumble, fatally checked in their attempts to achieve any act, either good or great. And with regard to the lesson of consideration for the feelings of others, knowing *practically* how difficult it is to do duty for its own sake, and how often it is that it sometimes proves so to do this duty at the right time, and in the right manner, though I have many more advantages and inducements to perform it than my servants can possibly have; shall I be so likely to be guilty of the sin of harshness, in case of occasional failure; or that of inconsiderateness, in over-tasking their powers, and, as so many do, converting them into mere machines, out of which to extract as much labour and profit, as can possibly be crowded into the twenty-four hours, without actual peril to life or limb?"

"I did not think of all this, mamma, but you see so much in everything."

"There is more in most things than appears on the surface, my love; or rather more serious consequences resulting from all our actions, than at first sight appears at all probable. But there are yet one or two more aspects of this question, I should like to touch upon."

"What are they?"

"Do you not consider money a gift from God, a talent for which we are responsible?"

"Certainly. I suppose so."

"Do you remember some time ago, asking me if papa could not afford to keep another servant?"

"I do. You told me he could, but did not think it right to do so. I was too much engaged then to explain my meaning fully; but will do so now. Do you think if Papa is steward of God's property, he would do right in spending a large amount needlessly, to procure the services of an additional domestic, in order to do what his daughter can not only do with ease, but what it is highly important she should learn to do; so important that without the knowledge, she will not only lack a true woman's most essential qualifications, but be actually unfit to perform the duties of mistress, wife, or mother. Should God, in His good providence, call her to either?"

"Looking at it in that light, it would not be right, of course; but I never thought of it so before."

"That is but one phase of the subject. We must not only look upon ourselves as responsible to God for the property He commits to our care, but also for other talents with which He entrusts us, our time, our example, our influence, even our words; yes, and our looks too."

"Oh, mamma, how serious you are!"

"No more serious than the subject demands. Our responsibility, as a whole, my child, is a very solemn and important thing; but alas! comparatively few think of it."

"I never did before in this way."

"And thousands never do to their dying day. Life is one grand mistake, and life's close an unspeakably awful and terrible awakening. To save my beloved daughter from so fatal an error, is my constant endeavour; as it is my earnest prayer, that God may bless my effort and crown it with success." Ellen looked thoughtful. "Will you tell me, mamma, how I can be responsible for everything as you say, even my looks? I cannot imagine how they can affect anybody; and I am sure they are often beyond my own control."

"Very seldom, my child, if your mind is rightly regulated. I cannot stay longer to talk with you now, however. This question of responsibility is a very curious one. Another time I may turn up the subject of influence, with which it is closely connected."

"Thank you, dear mamma. Meantime I will try to remember what you have said, and endeavour to do cheerfully what you wish."

"And in making the endeavour never forget, my darling, whose blessing alone can enable you to succeed. Ask this earnestly, and you will not fail in vain." E. R.

TRY AND TRY AGAIN.

This is an excellent book for the young. Admirable in style, elevating in tone, interesting and instructive from the commencement to the close. It is the work of a purely benevolent and practical man, whose life has been devoted to the religious, moral, and social advancement of his fellow-creatures. The details given in these pages warrant us in sincerely congratulating him on the success which has attended his manifold labours. The title has been selected for this book has been the motto of his life, "Try, Try, Try Again."* What better precept could we hope to instil into the minds of the young? what better illustration of its practical nature than the example of "Old Jonathan?" Earnest, truthful, and affectionate are the appeals which he offers; combining the wisdom of experience with the innocence of unsophisticated youth. The events of the narrative are related in a style at once instructive and attractive, and cannot fail to please. Well illustrated, clearly printed, elegantly bound and ornamented with a photographic frontispiece, no better book can be found for a birthday gift.

We print the following extract:—

MY MOTHER'S PORTRAIT.

"I muse, dear mother, on thy sacred memory! Not many years ago, I lay a helpless babe, beneath thy gentle care. Unconscious of each danger—scarcely aware of oft-repeated warnings, I reposed on thee—a poor dependant on thyself! 'Twas love—a mother's love—which prompted thee to watch thy infant, and not when that watching I contemplate, I cannot but admire His mercy who appointed thee my mother! But for His compassion—unmerited indeed—I might have been the offspring of a brute in human form, or

subjected to thousand ills, from which poor nature shrinks."

"I muse with gratitude to Him, the Author of my being, whilst yet I trace thy gentle hand in leading me, a dainty child, I see thy watchful eye, and muse upon deep solicitude which thou didst manifest on my behalf. Approaching boyhood—beginning now to show the seeds of disobedience—I see thee take my hand, admonish, and again behold thee bow the knee, a suppliant for thy boy!"

"And, a youth, I take my leave of home—the scene of early years. I stand and listen yet again to thy fond admonitions; yea, upon the eve of my departure. I hear thee say, as though it were but yesterday—'We are clear of your blood.' And again I wave adieu as I see thee stand, with tearful eye, among the little group assembled on the shore whence we parted."

"Mother! thy prayers were heard! A gracious eye watched o'er me; and, though that parting scene was dark, and unnumbered evils seemed as though they would prevail, yet how wisely did our heavenly Father provide! Forty years have rolled away since then, my mother, yet has mercy—boundless mercy—attended every step. Though vicissitude has marked my course, and trial and exercise have been my portion, yet compassions, infinite in number and degree, have ever been reserved for times of danger and necessity."

"And now, my mother, I would turn to contemplate thyself! But a brief period, and thou wast here, a dweller in a house of clay! I see its outward form. This picture brings thee to my recollection. Each feature is thine own, my mother!—yes, it is thine own familiar face; it, too, bears marks of anxious 'musing.' But, my mother, all has ended well with thee. Thou didst 'dread' 'the clomb.' I know. I, approached with threatening. But see its issue. Did not Jehovah graciously 'smile' His way to the 'house of prayer' that 'thou' attendest? there in early life! Who marked thy future course, and guided every step? Did not He, the Lord! And now arrived at hoary hairs—weak nature drooping—to whom camest thou for looking, but to Him! Cheer up, my mother, all is well. Jehovah will be faithful, though thou farest. He'll crown thee yet with glory."

"Ah! now the mind gives way. Intense solicitude through thy protracted pilgrimage, followed by that quietude which thou didst so often crave, brought a reaction that proved fatal to mental powers. Ah, my mother! mercy—rich mercy—mingles with the dispensation. It has brought us to resign thee at His bidding, who had need of thee. Thou wast such a mother—so tender, so solicitous—it was so true of thee, that

**See the failings
Lend 'em on virtue's side.*

—that we know not what, but such a trial as that with which thou now art visited, could have made us willing to surrender thee. Instructionally, it has made us willing to do thou shouldst go to take possession of thy mansion in the skies. One interval of reason is all we crave. Yes, yes. He gives it, blessed be our God! Thy heart—thine eye—are manifestly upward; thanks to His name! We are feared it not, for we are in His remembrance. The parting words—that outstretched hand—one long, yet brief adieu!—is grateful, and we part to meet again!"

Testimonies such as this are the mothers' highest and best earthly reward, furnishing a sweet forecast of that joy which shall be in the heart—when the answer is given to the summons—Here am I, Lord, and the children thou hast given me.

THE CHILD'S LOVE OF FLOWERS.

"Oh! dear mother, do let me take this flower to Miss Barbara, she will be so pleased; it will make her smile so, mother?" said a bright, fair, little girl of seven years, who was already equipped for school.

How she loved to see Miss Bateman smile at the pretty flowers, and then at herself, as if she would like to convey in her look and smile the sweetness and purity of the flower to herself. Isabella would have gladly passed the day, listening to the address which usually followed the gift of flowers from any of her little friends. Miss Bateman would place the little donor in her lap, whilst she led their young minds to the God who had formed the flowers, painted its varied tints, and made it redolent with sweetness; she would also make comparisons between the fading flower and the fragile human blossom. The lady's sparkling eyes of the dear child would gaze on, as if in rapt contemplation, while she took her first lessons on immortality.

Mrs. Hartwell had often denied little Isabella the flowers for which she pleaded, not knowing why. After opening rose-buds, and even every daisy, was craved by the child, to give as love pledges to her loved teacher, she knew not that that almost angel

child was preparing for its early heaven in the world of love and its ills.

Mr. Hartwell had died very young, and left dear Isabella as the only pledge of love to the widowed mother. The child was fragile and so gentle, that as Autumn approached, it shook her tender frame, and the lovely, sunny, child became too ill to leave the house.

One day, as Mrs. H. was anxiously watching by her, she beckoned her nearer, and whispered, "Mother, do you think Miss Bateman will come and see me?"

"I am sure she will, darling, but why do you ask me?"

"Oh! if she would come, mother, and talk to me about the flowers, and smile as she did when she told me of heaven, I think it would make me well—"

Miss B. was of the colony of the little sufferer, during the few weeks she lingered; but the last rough breath of Autumn had scarcely blown; when the Angel reaper, "Bound her in his sheaves."

Oh! desolate was that widow's home, and long and sadly ailed the lament her darling Bella. On the first visit of Miss Bateman, after her sorrow, in almost a wild phrensy, she exclaimed, "Oh! come back, my darling! you shall have all my flowers. Oh! had I known, I would have planted my garden full of flowers, and no hands but thine should have gathered them. Forgive thy mother, my Bella, for denying thee the flowers?"

Mothers, teach your little ones to love flowers, educate them with smiles, and while the heart is soft, seize it for Christ, and train it for the skies. A.

FRIENDLY HINTS TO YOUNG GIRLS WHO DESIRE TO BECOME GOOD SERVANTS.—A good servant, honest and trustworthy, one who will not do behind her mistress, and who will not do before her, is a rare find, an untold treasure in a house. Let me just give you one or two cautions, as we are all together to-night, and I may not have another opportunity of speaking on the same subject.

"And first, against changing your places often, unless there is some very good reason for it. Very likely you won't find in *any* place that everything will be as you like. There will always be some little rills and disagreeables which you may think hard to bear, but you will not find any station in life free from them. From the highest to the lowest, you will have to bear them bravely and patiently, and try to take them as trials which God sends for your good, than to be always changing, never settled, never at rest. Servants not to stay long enough in a place to get a home feeling about it. The time between the first and the last, ought to be as close and sacred, but it is broken so easily that it never has time to get strong. But I hope our A-bton girls will set a good example in this respect; and remember, among other reasons for it, the old proverb:—'A rolling stone gathers no moss.'"

"I have said you may find trials and difficulties in any place, but I must just ask you to take great care that none of them are of your own making, you may think that your mistress is sharp and particular, when the real truth is that you are careless and forgetful. There are very few places which are equally taking and make good and happy for herself, if she likes. An honest hearty desire to please, and a willingness to learn, will very seldom meet with anything but kindness in return."

"Again, I would ask you to be very careful of your employer's time. I am sure there is no girl here who would take a pin that was not her own, or think it right, I hope, to waste even a crumb of her master's property; but will you try and remember that when you saunter and idle over your work, or stay to gossip when you are sent to do a errand, or when you are asked what does not belong to you, and what you have no right to? You are paid for your time, you know. Your employer buys it of you at a price which you yourself agree to, so that it is not *your* any longer, and if you give it away, it is as good as if it were your own; you are not acting honestly, any more than you would be if you found a shilling in sweeping the carpet some morning, and put it in your pocket instead of laying it on the table. To call things by their right names, one is stealing just as much as the other."

"There is another little thing which should like to remind you of, for though it seems a mere trifle, it is of consequence nevertheless. Always try to do your work as *quietly* as you can. Noise does not really help, and it *does* interfere very much with the comfort of others in the house. I have known many a sick person almost tremble when a servant entered their room, because the noise she was sure to make actually made them worse. A light, quick, noiseless step, a gentle way of moving things, putting them down firmly and quietly, instead of throwing them about, as if you meant to break them—these are really habits to be valued, especially in a house made of wicker. 'She keeps me in constant fear,' I once heard a gentleman say of a rattling noisy girl, 'because when she comes into a room, I never know what she will upset.' To shut doors quietly, to speak in a low tone, to move softly, you don't see any need of care in these things, perhaps, but others do, and you should be careful and thoughtful for their sakes."—*Jetty Bowman.*

THE CHILD'S ENQUIRY.

"WILL FATHER BE A GOAT THEN, MOTHER?"

"The darkest hour is that before the dawn."

One day James Stirling—the drunken cobbler—was sent for to a public-house in the morning, and remained drinking there till the evening. He had been oscillating between this house and his work for several days before, as was his usual practice when the drinking fit was on him, unwashed, poorly clad, and without a penny. His will seemed curbed in the grasp of a master will, that had all but made a complete wreck of his conscience, honour, and affection, and to all appearance he was drifting hopelessly onward to ruin. But help, remonstrance, resistless appeal, conviction, were at hand, and God employed the simple, but startling, question of a little child to arrest the drunken father in his downward career.

His faithful wife had always been in the habit of observing family worship with the children when he was absent. She sat down with a heavy heart and with tears in her eyes that night to this exercise, which had so often been her solace.

Looking to the younger children she said, "Poor things, my heart is sore for you and your father—"

"What followed is so affecting that James Stirling must tell it himself.

"I had been all day in the public-house, and at night when I came home, my wife, as usual, was reading a chapter to the children. When she was so engaged I went slipping in like a condemned criminal. The portion of Scripture read was the 25th chapter of St. Matthew's gospel, in which these words occur—

"When the Son of Man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory:

"And before Him shall be gathered all nations, and He shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth the sheep from the goats:

"And He shall set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left."

"Our youngest boy, then about four years old, was lying with his head on his mother's lap, and just when she had read these awful words he looked up earnestly in her face and asked, 'Will father be a goat then, mother?'"

"This too strong to be resisted. The earnest, innocent look of the child, the bewilderment of the poor mother, and above all, the question itself, smote me to the heart's core. I spent a sleepless awful miserable night, wishing rather to die than live such a life."

I was ashamed to go to church on the following Sabbath. I stepped at home and read the 'Six Sermons on Intemperance,' by Beecher, which had found their way into the house, but how I never knew. But so it was that when looking about the house for some suitable book to read on the Sabbath, I laid my hands on them, and they seemed as if written and printed and sent for me alone. I was now decided. My resolution was taken, as it had never been before. All the men on earth could not have tempted me to drink, 'clear' or 'brown,' 'thick' or 'thin.'

Stirling says that he never knew how Beecher's Sermons were brought into the house. They were left three months before by his faithful minister. On that memorable Sabbath his truly noble wife, ever watchful over him, saw that a precious opportunity had come, and with earnest prayer to her God, and with feelings trembling between hope and despair, she laid the six memorable Sermons in a place where he could not but find them, and quietly left results with Him who "turns the darkness into light and the night of weeping into the morning without clouds."—*Memoir of James Stirling.*

Poor weeping heart-broken wife, take courage. Still read God's Holy Word, and pray with your children. You are tempted to give it up. You think, where is the use? Pray on. Praying breath is never spent in vain. Pray for your husband—each your children to pray for their father. The day may yet come when a message from God will strike home like an arrow to his heart, as it did with James Stirling. Be on the watch. Do as his wife did. Lose no "precious opportunity." One thoughtful, gentle act like hers may win him back. One well timed loving word may prove irresistible.

GOD, OUR FATHER,
CHRIST, OUR SAVIOUR,
THE HOLY GHOST, OUR COMFORTER.

are all for you in your labour of love for your sinning husband. Who then can be against you? Look up, and may God, even 'our own God,' give you strength. A lone woman, fighting the hard battle of life on earth, you are not forgotten in heaven. Angels on the throne remember you. He once wept His way to Calvary. He does not forget His anguish. It was for your sin. He was wounded for your transgressions—bruised for your iniquities. Do you believe it? Then, as God's forgiven child, having redemption through His blood, lean your burdened, weary soul on Him and rest. He is touched with the feeling of your sorrows. He knows them all. When your heart is overwhelmed within you He knows your path. He will lead you to the rock, and set your feet upon it. The billows may break and roar around; they may overwhelm you but not your Rock, for it is the Rock of Ages. In all your affliction He is afflicted. Jesus bears you tenderly on His breast; bares you and carries you and covers you all the day long, though you know it not. Hope then in Him—you shall yet praise Him.

Say to Him, "Thou art my hiding-place. I will trust and not be afraid." And He will answer you, "Trust ye in the Lord for ever, for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength."

E. A.

SONGS OF HOME.—No. 4.

OUR HEARTHES AND HOMES.

TUNE—"Blue Bells of Scotland."

Oh! where and oh! where is the brightest spot on earth?

Oh! where and oh! where is the brightest spot on earth?

Where rings the sweetest laughter, the happiest sounds of mirth?

Where cluster all the joys of the fairest, truest worth?

Where cluster all, Where cluster all,

Oh! the brightest spot on earth is our happy, happy, home,

Oh! the brightest spot on earth is our happy, happy, home,

Where hunger and resentment should never, never come,

We are yearning after that whoso'er our feet may roam.

We are yearning after, We are yearning after,

The frost and the snow and the wintry winds are cold,

The frost and the snow and the wintry winds are cold,

But the hearts are very warm which the loving ones enfold,

And affection's sunny rays make the gladsome spirit bold.

Oh! bright is the blaze of the well-surrounded fire,

Oh! bright is the blaze of the well-surrounded fire,

And brighter still the eyes that are full of kind desire,

For the weal of each dear life in our own melodious choir.

For the weal of each, For the weal of each, For the weal of each, For the weal of each,

God bless every one of our little household band,

God bless every one of our little household band,

With the sympathetic heart and the eager, helping hand,

May we all be guided safe to the fair and fearless land!

May we all be guided, May we all be guided, May we all be guided, May we all be guided,

M. F.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

A highly-esteemed and very popular Prosewer of the Gospel has thus encouraged us in our labours—

"The design of your Periodic is every way praiseworthy, and if you are able to bring out, month by month, a number as attractive in appearance, and with articles as varied and interesting as that now before me, you will be sure to exert a wide and happy influence among the class—those weak who have at heart. I wish you success most cordially."

Our grateful thanks are due, and are hereby presented to the Rev. JOHN EDMOND, Presbyterian Church, Highgate, Rev. J. J. CONNOR, Congregational Church, Barnsey, Rev. J. CONNOR, Barnsey, Mr. WELCH, Mr. SARGENT, Mr. HOSKIN, Mr. LAYTON, Mr. DICKSON, Mr. AVEN, Mr. DOWRY, and several others.

"DEAR SIR,—I was not aware of your publication, the 'British Workwoman,' until the other day. My London Agent sent me one dozen in mistake for another publication as I was short. I sent twenty dozens of the 'WORKMAN,' and I am sure if the 'WORKWOMAN' was pushed it would take well; and if you will send me some pattern and hand-bills, I will canvass the towns as I did for the 'WORKMAN.' I have three boys that take out newspapers daily, and can deliver at some time. I will put the bills up in the work-hops, for I find it useful, and the manufacturers will let me do so."—With best wishes, I am, &c.

"SIR,—I never saw or heard of your 'British Workwoman' until last week, since then I have got sixteen subscribers for it. I like it very much, and if you would send me some of your prospectuses respecting it, and a few posters if you have any, I have no doubt I should get a good circulation for it in this neighbourhood. Yours respectfully,

We shall be glad to forward a couple of prospectuses to any of our friends willing to follow the example of these two good friends to the cause of the 'British Workwoman.'"

"MY DEAR SIR,—I have perused the number of the 'British Workwoman,' which you left me, and I believe it to be the periodical which has been long required to assist in creating that class in their spirit and most position. Send me 50 copies monthly."

EDITH.—Your sympathy for the distressed seamstresses does much credit to your feelings. We advise you, however, to receive it, intended contribution to the Editor of the 'British Workwoman,' 31, Paternoster Row, E.C. We cannot undertake to forward it.

OLNEY.—A very excellent edition of the Works of Cooper has just been commenced, put up with great care, and published in Twenty numbers by Mr. W. Tweed, 37, Strand.

MARY.—"Songs of Home" are especially written for the "BRITISH WORKWOMAN."

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